Clearance of irrigation projects of Andhra Pradesh

2630. SHRI NANDI YELLIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh *vide* letter dated 27th April, 2005, addressed to his Ministry sought clearance of irrigation projects, namely (1) laying of water conductor system for Godavari Lift Irrigation Scheme; (2) Maddigadda Project; and (3) Peddagadda Reservoir Scheme;

(b) the reasons for delay in giving early clearance, inspite of having already received clarifications from Andhra Pradesh Government as sought by his Ministry;

(c) whether Government would ensure clearance of these pending projects at the earliest, in the interest of increasing agricultural production in our country;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) The proposal regarding laying of water conductor system under Godavari Lift Irrigation Scheme has been approved by Central Government whereas in-principle approval has been granted to Maddigadda Project subject to fulfilment of certain conditions. Peddagadda Reservoir Project is pending with Government of Andhra Pradesh for submission of detailed rehabilitation plan and catchment area treatment plan.

(c) Government of India takes decision on the projects that are in order in a time-bound manner so as to save delay.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Forest dwellers

2631. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of families compelled to leave forests owing to provisions of forest and Environment Act during the period from 2000-01 to 2003-04, State-wise;

(b) how many of them are tirbals; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to safeguard the interests of the forest dwellers?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) The data pertaining to the number of families evicted from forests is maintained by the concerned State/Union Territory Government.

(c) The Ministry of Environment and forests has issued guidelines on 18.09.1990 under the Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980 for grant of traditional rights of forest dwellers over forest land. Under these guidelines, about 3.66 lakh hectares of encroachment of forest land has been regularised and 511 forest villages have been converted into revenue villages. This process could not be continued further due to the ban imposed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on de-reservation of forest land as well as regularisation of encroachment. The Ministry is pursuing the matter with the Hon'ble Court to obtain a suitable modification in the orders so that grant of traditional rights over forest land could be continued further under the forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also requested all the State/Union Territory Governments not to resort to eviction of forest dwellers other than ineligible encroachers of forest land till complete survey is carried out for recognition of such people and their rights over forest land as provided in the guidelines dated 18.09.1990 issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The Ministry has also issued detailed revised guidelines on 03.11.2005 for verification/recognition of such rights over forest land and has requested the State/Union Territory Government to complete the process.

Poaching of tigers

2632. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that three poachers have admitted that they killed at least 22 tigers in Ranthambore since 2003 right under the nose of 273 forest staff that guard India's most famous tiger reserve;

(b) whether it is a fact that these poachers had free access to the forests and they even travelled by jeep; and